

FIRING PROCEDURES AND COMMANDS

The range officer or instructor conducts the firing activity on the range. One of these personnel will be on the range with the cadets at all times without exception. To begin a range activity, the range officer designates the shooters who will use the firing points and instructs them to move their equipment to the firing line and take their shooting positions. When rifles are brought to the range, their muzzles must be pointed upward or downward range, their **actions** must be open and the guns must be unloaded. After the shooters get into their shooting positions and are ready, the range officer gives a series of commands to start and stop firing.

- **LOAD.** No one may load any rifle until the range officer gives the command **LOAD**. Then the shooters may cock their rifles and insert a pellet or cartridge in them. It is a serious offense to load a rifle on a range before the command **LOAD** is given.
- **START.** The next command tells the shooters that they can begin to aim and fire at their targets. No one may fire a shot until this command is given, even if the command **LOAD** has been given.
- **STOP.** When shooting is finished, the range officer commands **STOP**. If the command **STOP** is given during firing, every shooter must immediately stop firing, open the **actions** on their rifles and wait for further instructions. No one is authorized to fire a shot after the command **STOP** is given. The range officer or any other person on the range can command **STOP** if they become aware of a dangerous or unsafe condition.
- **UNLOAD.** If anyone on a range has a loaded air rifle after the command **STOP** is given, they must notify the range officer by raising their hand or calling out "*Loaded rifle.*" The instructor will then give directions for unloading any loaded rifles. Loaded air rifles are normally unloaded by firing the rifle into an Air Rifle Discharge Container.

After firing is completed the range officer will check each rifle to be sure it is unloaded and the action is open. When that check is completed, the range officer will instruct the shooters on the firing line to leave the firing line so the next group of shooters can move up to the firing line.

There are a few other rules that are used on shooting ranges to assure safety and orderly conduct of the shooting activity. Every shooter should be familiar with these rules and any special rules that apply to the range you are using.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY RULES

1. **TARGET.** Shoot only at the target designated for you. Be sure your target is properly placed in front of a safe backstop. Shooting at any object on a range besides your own target is strictly forbidden.
2. **LOADING.** Rifle muzzles must remain pointed downrange or upward whenever the rifle is cocked and loaded. Special care must be taken to assure that a rifle muzzle is never allowed to point at a neighboring shooter or to any area behind the firing line during cocking and loading.
3. **GOING DOWNRANGE.**
Whenever it is necessary for someone to go forward of the firing line to place or retrieve a target or for any other purpose, all rifle actions must be opened and rifles placed on the floor. No one should go forward of the firing line until authorized to do so by the range officer and no one should handle rifles while anyone is in front of the firing line.
4. **TREAT EVERY RIFLE AS IF IT WERE LOADED.** This is the ultimate gun safety rule. Even if you are sure your rifle is unloaded and even if a range officer has checked it treat the rifle as if it were loaded. Be sure it is never pointed at another person.